

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE BARBICAN IN CONNECTION WITH OUR CASTLES.

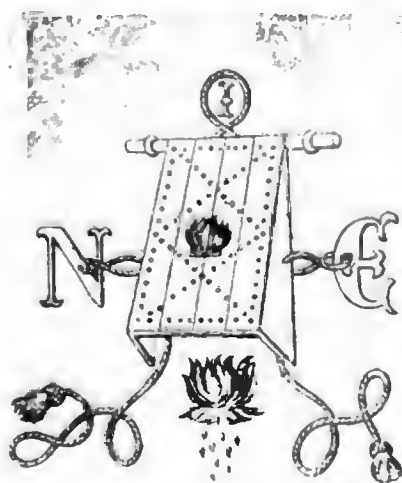


Fig. 1.

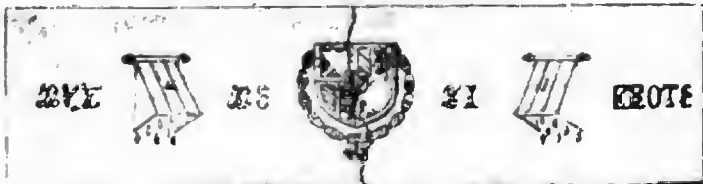


Fig. 2.



Fig. 3.



Fig. 4.

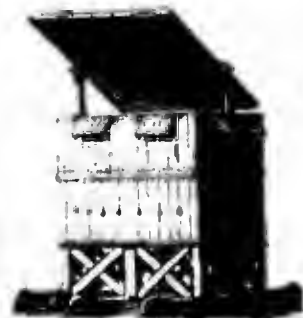


Fig. 5.

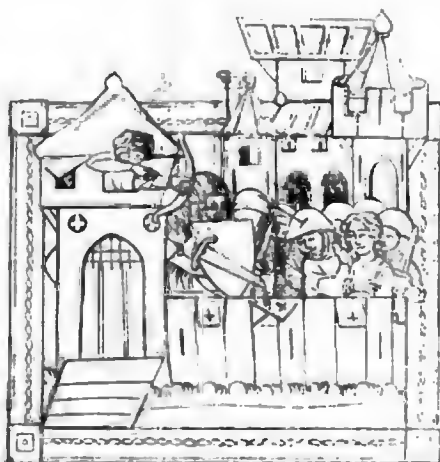


Fig. 6.

the city, called in some language a barbican, as a *bekening* is called a beacon."

In the "Promptorium Parvulorum," written circa 1440, recently edited by Mr. Way, "barbican" is explained as "by-fore a castelle, *Antemurale*." The editor says in a note:—"Spelman explains the barbican to be *munitioni à fronte castris, aliter antemurale dictum: etiam foremen in urbium castrorumque muris ad tragicendam missilio. Sax. Burgening. Voe Arabica*." Pennant asserts that the Saxons called the barbican to the north-west of Cripplegate, *burgh-kenning*; other writers have suggested a different etymology. A. S. *byrk-beacen, urbis speculo*. Bullet would derive it from the Celtic, *bar*, before; *bach*, an enclosure. Lys gives barbican as a word adopted in the Anglo-Saxon language, and we must certainly not seek thence its derivation."

As early as 1232, according to Britton's "Architectural Dictionary," we find in a charter, "*Antemurā qui dicitur barbicanus, qui est murus brevis ante murum nostri orti*." Spenser, in the "Faerie Queene" (b. ii.), has—

"Within the barbican a porter sat,
Day and night daily keeping watch and ward."

And Ben Jonson uses the term in his "Epithalamion,"—

"That all-seeing eye could soon espy
What kind of waking man He had so highly set,
and in what barbican."

* Quoted in Knight's "Cyclopaedia."

An anonymous writer of the time of Henry the Fifth, in the British Museum, quoted by Sir (then Mr.) Harris Nicolas, in his "History of the Battle of Agincourt" (1415), describing the fortifications of Harfleur, says, "before the entrance of each of the three gates, the prudence of the enemy had erected a strong defence, which we term a *barbican*, but commonly called *bulwarks*: that towards the king was the strongest and largest, being defended without with round, thick trees, nearly to the height of the walls of the town, fastened around, bound, and girded together very strongly."

The structure of it was round, containing more in diameter than the cast of a stone, with which our common people in England are wont to amuse themselves by the road-side: water of great depth and breadth surrounded it, being about two lances' length broad in the narrowest part, having a bridge for ingress and egress towards the town."

And Lydgate has in his "Story of Thebes,"†

"And made, also, by workmen that were trow,
Barbicans and *bulwerkes*, strong and new,
Barriers, chaires, and ditches wonder deepe;
Making his enow the city for to keepe."

The extracts I have quoted refer to the barbican mainly as a watch-tower or outwork of defence, and this is the idea which generally attaches to it. In a letter, however, addressed

* Johnson, Brooke street, Mulberry.

† Quoted, Oxford Glossary.

(June 1837) to the Society of Antiquaries by Mr. Planché, on a curious portrait supposed to represent Charles the Bold, but which he ingeniously showed was his brother Anthony, Bastard of Burgundy. Mr. Planché pointed out what he thought was a representation of a barbican of different appearance. He had identified the portrait by an engraving in Montfaucon's "Monarchie Française," which showed also Anthony's badge and war-cry. Montfaucon described the badge as *une espèce de Pavillon* (a sort of tent or flag) surrounded by flames, and the motto "*Nul se n'feoit*." On the back of the picture in question was found what Montfaucon had thus described (see Fig. 1), but which there had the appearance of being composed of planks of wood, with fire coming through the centre. Mr. Planché found that Oliver de la Marche says, that at the siege of Oudeoarde, A.D. 1452, Anthony bore a great white standard embroidered with a barbican; and at the *Pas de l'Arbre d'Or*, sixteen years afterwards, the same author describes him as issuing from his pavilion, on a horse trapped with tawny velvet, embroidered with large *barbicanes*, with flames issuing out of them, and letters of his device, all worked in gold thread. Remembering that barbican was explained by Roquefort to mean not only a tower but a loop-hole, and any sort of outwork, and that Colgrave, under the same word, says,— "Some hold it to be a scutrie, scout-house, or hole;" he suggested it as probable that the figure before us was intended to represent, not a tent, but the barbican described by Oliver de la Marche, with flames coming through the centre. Mr. Planché afterwards went to the ruins of the Castle of Tournelien, in Artois, the residence of Anthony, and there he found the same badge on various portions of the building, notice of which he communicated to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, with the accompanying cuts, (figs. 2, 3, 4, and 5), for the use of which we are indebted to our esteemed contemporary.

There can be no doubt, as I think you will agree with me, of the correctness of the supposition, that Montfaucon evidently did not understand the bridge he described: you will see that it is much more like a penthouse of wood to protect an opening in castle walls than a tent or flag. Figure 5 is a drawing of a movable tower of the fifteenth century, from a MS. in the British Museum, which shows, in the upper part of it, just such an arrangement as a protection for archers, and illustrates what were really understood as barbicans in early times.

Other instances, however, can be adduced. There is an exceedingly interesting illuminated MS. in three volumes, preserved in the British